Sri Aurobindo in the year 1908 - 1909

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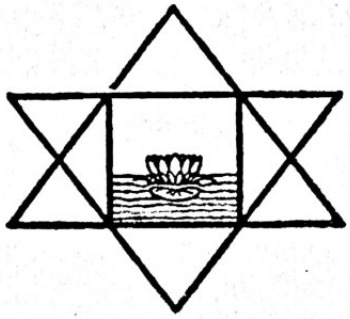

He comes unseen into our darker parts
And, curtained by the darkness, does his work,
A subtle and all-knowing guest and guide,
Till they too feel the need and will to change.
All here must learn to obey a higher law,
Our body's cells must hold the Immortal's flame.

Sri Aurobindo

The idea that spiritual life requires a rising above the ordinary way of living by the ordinary mentality sometimes appears too high and one might feel that it is not easily possible to prepare oneself for it. But if we see more deeply true spirituality itself brings strength and light of a higher life in which our body, life and mind find their own perfection and fulfilment. Spiritual life as such brings to us an all round progress, removing all difficulties of the lower nature. Since the Divine is already present hidden in our life we can be quite confident that our efforts for a divine life will receive all support from the all-powerful God. Quest for God is certainly the highest of man's quests but it is also the most intimate and natural quest he has been making through all his religious, scientific and philosophical seekings. The important thing is that he should be clear and conscious of the truth of this quest.

The present issue of the AIM purports to bring home this truth and reproduce selected portions from Sri Aurobindo's On Yoga II Tome One, Life Divine, and the Mother's explanatory notes published in the Bulletin of Education, Volume VI-3, XI-2, XV-1, and the Prayers and Meditations of The Mother.

Editor

SPIRITUALITY HELPS MIND

"Spirituality helps the mind to escape from itself."
*(*Sri Aurobindo - *The Life Divine)*

So long as the mind is convinced that it is the summit of human consciousness, and that there is nothing above and beyond it, it takes its functioning as a perfect functioning and is wholly satisfied with the progress it is able to make within the limits of this functioning, with an increase of clarity, precision, complexity, suppleness, plasticity in its movements.

It has always a spontaneous tendency to be self-satisfied and satisfied with what it is capable of doing, and if there were no greater force than its own, a higher force making it learn in an irrefutable manner its limitations, its indigence, it would never make an effort to come out of it by the true door of exit: liberation into a higher truer mode of being.

When the spiritual force can act, when it begins to have an influence, then it shakes this self-satisfaction of the mind and by a continuous pressure begins to make it feel that beyond it there is something higher and truer, then a little of this self-conceit begins to yield; and once it is aware that it is limited, ignorant, incapable of touching the true truth, its liberation begins and the possibilty

of its opening to something beyond. But for it to surrender it must feel the power, the beauty, the force of this beyond. It must perceive its incapacity and its limitation in front of something higher than itself, otherwise how can it feel its infirmity!

At times a single contact is sufficient, something that makes a little rift in this self-contentment, then the desire to go beyond, the need of a purer light awakes and with this awakening comes the aspiration to conquer and with the aspiration begins the liberation and one day bursting your limits you open out into the infinite Light.

If there were not this constant pressure, at once from within and from without, from above and from the deepest depths, nothing would ever change.

Even with that, how much time is needed for things to change! What obstinate resistance is there in this lower nature, what blind and stupid attachment to the animal ways of being, what refusal to be liberated!

There is in the whole manifestation an infinite Grace which is working constantly to lead the world out of the misery, the obscurity and the stupidity in which it happens to be. At all times this Grace is at work, without ever ceasing its effort; and yet how many thousands of years have been necessary for this world to awake to the necessity of something that is more true, more great, more beautiful.

By the resistance that one meets in his own being, everyone can measure the tremendous resistance that the world offers to the work of the Grace.

It is only when you understand that all external things, all mental constructions, all material efforts are vain, useless, only when you are entirely consecrated to this Light and to this Force above, to this Truth that is trying to express itself that you become ready for the decisive progress. Therefore the one truly effective attitude is the perfect, total, fervent giving of one's self to That which is above us and which alone has the power to change everything.

When you open yourself to the Spirit within you, it gives a first foretaste of this higher life that alone is worth living, then comes the will to lift yourself to that, the hope of reaching it, the certitude that it is possible, and finally the force to make the necessary effort and the resolution to go through.

First you must awake, then you can conquer.

The Mother

The difficulties you find in the spiritual progress are common to us all. In this yoga the progress is always attended with these relapses into the ordinary mentality until the whole being is so remoulded that it can no longer be affected either by any downward tendency in our own nature or by the impression from the discordant world outside or even by the mental state of those associated with us most closely in the yoga. The ordinary yoga is usually concentrated on a single aim and therefore less exposed to such recoils; ours is so complex and many-sided and embraces such large aims that we cannot expect any smooth progress until we near the completion of an effort,—especially as all the hostile forces in the spiritual world are in a constant state of opposition and besiege our gains; for the complete victory of a single one of us would mean a general downfall among them. In fact by our own unaided effort we could not hope to succeed. It is only in proportion as we come more and more in communion with the Highest that we can hope to overcome with any finality. For myself I have had to come back so often from things that seemed to have been securely gained that it is only relatively that I can say of any part of my yoga, "It is done". Still I have always found that when I recover from one of these recoils, it is always with a new spiritual gain which might

have been neglected or missed if I had remained securely in my former state of partial satisfaction. Especially, as I have long had the map of my advance sketched out before me, I am able to measure my progress at each step and the particular losses are compensated for by the clear consciousness of the general advance that has been made. The final goal is far but the progress made in the face of so constant and massive an opposition is the guarantee of its being gained in the end. But the time is in other hands than ours. Therefore I have put impatience and dissatisfaction far away from me.

An absolute equality of the mind and heart and a clear purity and calm strength in all the members of the being have long been the primary condition on which the power working in me has insisted with an inexhaustible patience and an undeviating constancy of will which rejects all the efforts of other powers to hasten forward to the neglect of these first requisites. Whenever they are impaired it returns upon them and works over and again over the weak points like a workman patiently mending the defects of his work. These seem to me to be the foundation and condition of all the rest. As they become firmer and more complete the system is more able to hold consistently and vividly the settled perception of the one in all things, in all qualities, forces, happenings, in all this world-consciousness and the play of its workings. That founds the Unity and upon it the

deep satisfaction and growing rapture of the Unity. It is this to which our nature is most recalcitrant. It persists in the division, in the dualities, in the sorrow and unsatisfied passion and labour, it finds it difficult to accustom itself to the divine largeness, joy and equipoise—especially the vital and material parts of our nature; it is they that pull down the mind which has accepted and even when it has long lived in the joy and peace and oneness. That, I suppose, is why the religions and philosophies have had so strong a leaning to the condemnation of Life and Matter and aimed at an escape instead of a victory. But the victory has to be won; the rebellious elements have to be redeemed and transformed, not rejected or excised.

When the Unity has been well founded, the static half of our work is done, but the active half remains. It is then that in the One we must see the Master and His Power,—Krishna and Kali as I name them using the terms of our Indian religions; the Power occupying the whole of myself and my nature which becomes Kali and ceases to be anything else, the Master using, directing, enjoying the power to his ends, not mine, with that which I call myself only as a centre of his universal existence and responding to its workings as a soul to the Soul, taking upon itself his image until there is nothing left but Krishna and Kali. This is the stage I have reached in spite of all set-backs and

recoils, imperfectly indeed in the secureness and intensity of the state, but well enough in the general type. When that has been done, then we hope to found securely the play in us of his divine Knowledge governing the action of his divine Power. The rest is the full opening up of the different planes of his world-play and the subjection of Matter and the body and the material world to the law of the higher heaven of the Truth. To these things towards which in my earlier ignorance I used to press forward impatiently before satisfying the first conditions—the effort, however, was necessary and made the necessary preparation of the material instruments—I can now only look forward as a subsequent eventuality in a yet distant vista of things.

To possess securely the Light and the Force of the supramental being, this is the main object to which the power is now turning. But the remnants of the old habits of intellectual thought and mental will come so obstinately in their determination to remain that the progress is hampered, uncertain and always falls back from the little achievement already effected. They are no longer within me, they are blind, stupid, mechanical, incorrigible even when they perceive their incompetence, but they crowd round the mind and pour in their suggestions whenever it tries to remain open only to the supramental Light and the higher Command, so that the Knowledge and the Will reach the mind in a confused, dis-

torted and often misleading form. It is, however, only a question of time: the siege will diminish in force and be finally dispelled.

Sri Aurobindo

The old yoga demanded a complete renunciation extending to giving up of the wordly life itself. This yoga aims instead at a new transformed life. But it insists as inexorably on a complete throwing away of desire and attachment in the mind, life and body. Its aim is to refound life in the truth of the spirit and for that purpose to transfer the roots of all we are and do from the mind, life and body to a greater consciousness above the mind. That means that in the new life all the connections must be founded on a spiritual intimacy and a truth quite other than any which supports our present connections. One must be prepared to renounce at the higher call what are spoken of as the natural affections. Even if they are kept at all, it can only be with a change which transforms them altogether. But whether they are to be renounced or kept and changed must be decided not by the personal desires but by the truth above. All must be given up to the Supreme Master of the yoga.

Sri Aurobindo

THE INVOLVED SUPERMIND

" A supermind is already here but it is involved, concealed behind this manifest mind and matter..."

(The Supramental Manifestation. p. 78)

What is "involved supermind"?

It is the same as that which is not involved !

There are many ways of saying the same thing. Sri Aurobindo also says that if the Divine were not at the centre of all things, He would never be able to manifest in the world. It is the same thing. Or he says that essentially, in its origin and in its inmost structure, the creation is divine, the world is divine; that is why this divinity will be able to manifest itself one day, become tangible, be expressed fully, replacing all that now veils it and deforms it. Till now the manifestation of this divinity has been limited to the world as we know it; but the manifestation is limitless and after this mental world of which man is the prototype and summit, there will be another reality which he calls the supramental; it is indeed the step that comes after the mental—seen from the world as it is, it will naturally be supramental, that is to say above the mind. Sri Aurobindo says also that this new step will really be the change of one world into another, because till now all creation belongs to what he calls "the lower hemisphere", which is

ruled by Ignorance and is based on the Inconscient, whereas the other will be a total reversal; it will belong to a world altogether different; instead of being based on Ignorance it will be based on Truth. That is why it would be truly a new world. But if the essence, the principle of this world were not already contained within the world as we have known it, there would be no hope of the one being transformed into the other; they would be two totally different and opposite worlds and there would be no contact between them; and necessarily the moment one came out into this world of Truth and Light and Knowledge, one would become, so to say, imperceptible, non-existent for the world which would belong exclusively to Ignorance and Inconscience.

How is it then that even when this change will have taken place there will be a relation between the two, how can this new world have an action on the old one? It is because in its esssence and in its principle it is already enclosed, involved in the old one. In fact, it is there, quite at the bottom, hidden, invisible, imperceptible, unexpressed—but it is there in its essence. Yet, unless the supramental consciousness, force and light from the higher heights manifests directly in the world, never will this supramental which is in principle in the inmost depth of the material world as it is, have any possibility to manifest itself. Its awakening and appearance here below will

be the answer to a contact from above, which will bring out its like element embedded at the bottom of matter as it is. That is, however, what is happening now.

The time it will take is difficult to foresee. It will depend much on the good will and receptivity of a certain number of people, because the individual always advances quicker than the collectivity and humanity by its very nature is destined to manifest the Supramental before the rest of the creation.

At the basis of this collaboration there must be necessarily the will to change, not to be what one is, and that things must not be as they are. There are several ways to come there and all ways are good when they succeed ! One can be thoroughly disgusted with what is and can want ardently to come out of all that and attain something else. One can, and it is a more positive way, one can feel within oneself the contact, the approach of something positively beautiful and true and discard all the rest deliberately so that nothing may weigh heavy on the march towards this new beauty and truth. What is indispensable, in any case, is the ardent will to progress, the willing and glad rejection of all that is a shackle to the march, to cast away from oneself what prevents you from advancing and moving towards the unknown with the ardent faith that it is the inescapable truth of tomorrow, that will happen necessarily, a truth that nothing, nobody, no bad will, even the will of

Nature, can prevent from becoming the reality—not perhaps in a distant future—a reality that is working itself out at this moment and they who know how to change, who know how not to be burdened with old habits will surely have the happiness not only to perceive but to realise.

You go to sleep, you forget, you just go on living—you forget, you forget all the time. But if you could remember—remember that you are at an exceptional hour, in a unique epoch, that you have this great happiness, this invaluable privilege of being present at the birth of a new world, then you could easily get rid of all that impedes you, prevents you from advancing. Therefore the most important thing seems to be to remember the fact. Even when you have not the tangible experience, to have the certitude, to have the faith, to remember always, to recall it constantly, to go to sleep with this idea, to awake with this feeling; to do whatever you do, having at the background, like a constant support this great truth that you are present at the birth of a new world.

You may participate in it, you may become this new world. And truly, indeed, when you have such a wonderful opportunity, you must be ready to give up everything for that.

The Mother

The quest of man for God, which becomes in the end the most ardent and enthralling of all his quests, begins with his first vague questings of Nature and a sense of something unseen both in himself and her. Even if, as modern Science insists, religion started from animism, spirit-worship, demon-worship and the deification of natural forces, these first forms only embody in primitive figures a veiled intuition in the subconscient, an obscure and ignorant feeling of hidden influences and incalculable forces, or a vague sense of being, will, intelligence in what seems to us inconscient, of the invisible behind the visible, of the secretly conscious spirit in things distributing itself in every working of energy. The obscurity and primitive inadequacy of the first perceptions do not detract from the value or the truth of this great quest of the human heart and mind, since all our seekings—including Science itself—must start from an obscure and ignorant perception of hidden realities and proceed to the more and more luminous vision of the Truth which at first comes to us masked, draped, veiled by the mists of the Ignorance. Anthropomorphism is an imaged recognition of the truth that man is what he is because God is what He is and that there is one soul and body of things, humanity even in its incompleteness the most complete manifestation

yet achieved here and divinity the perfection of wha in man is imperfect. That he sees himself everywhere and worships that as God is also true; but here too he has laid confusedly the groping hand of Ignorance on a truth—that his being and the Being are one, that this is a partial reflection of That, and that to find his greater Self everywhere is to find God and to come near to the Reality in things, the Reality of all existence.

A unity behind diversity and discord is the secret of the variety of human religions and philosophies; for they all get at some image or some side clue, touch some portion of the one Truth or envisage some one of its myriad aspects. Whether they see dimly the material world as the body of the Divine or life as a great pulsation of the breath of Divine Existence, or all things as thoughts of the cosmic Mind, or realise that there is a Spirit which is greater than these things, their subtler and yet more wonderful source and creator,—whether they find God only in the Inconscient or as the one Conscious in inconscient things or as an ineffable superconscious Existence to reach whom we must leave behind our terrestrial being and annul the mind, life and body, or, overcoming division, see that He is all these at once and accept fearlessly the large consequences of that vision,—whether they worship Him with universality as the Cosmic Being or limit Him and themselves, like the

Positivist, in humanity only or, on the contrary, carried away by the vision of the timeless and spaceless Immutable, reject Him in Nature and Cosmos,—whether they adore Him in various strange or beautiful or magnified forms of the human ego or for His perfect possession of the qualities to which man aspires, his Divinity revealed to them as a supreme Power, Love, Beauty, Truth, Righteousness, Wisdom,—whether they perceive Him as the Lord of Nature, Father and Creator, or as Nature herself and the universal Mother, pursue Him as the Lover and attracter of souls or serve Him as the hidden Master of all works, bow down before the one God or the manifold Deity, the one divine Man or the one Divine in all men or, more largely, discover the One whose presence enables us to become unified in consciousness or in works or in life with all beings, unified with all things in Time and Space, unified with Nature and her influences and even her inanimate forces,—the truth behind must ever be the same because all is the one Divine infinite whom all are seeking. Because everything is that One, there must be this endless variety in the human approach to its possession; it was necessary that man should find God thus variously in order that he might come to know Him entirely. But it is when knowledge reaches its highest aspects that it is possible to arrive at its greatest unity. The highest and the

widest seeing is the wisest; for then all knowledge is unified in its one comprehensive meaning. All religions are seen as approaches to a single Truth, all philosophies are divergent view-points looking at different sides of a single Reality, all Sciences meet together in a supreme Science. For that which all our mind-knowledge and sense-knowledge and suprasensuous vision is seeking, is found most integrally in the unity of God and man and Nature and all that is in Nature.

The Brahman, the Absolute is the Spirit, the timeless Self, the Self possessing Time, Lord of Nature, creator and continent of the cosmos and immanent in all existences, the Soul from whom all souls derive and to whom they are drawn,—that is the truth of Being as man's highest God-conception sees it. The same Absolute revealed in all relativities, the Spirit who embodies Himself in cosmic Mind and Life and Matter and of whom Nature is the self of energy so that all she seems to create is the Self and Spirit variously manifested in His own being to His own conscious force for the delight of His various existence,—this is the truth of being to which man's knowledge of Nature and cosmos is leading him and which he will reach when his Nature-knowledge unites itself with the God-knowledge. This truth of the Absolute is the justification of the cycles of the world; it is not their denial. It is the Self-Being that has become all these becomings; the Self is the eternal

unity of all these existences,—I am He. Cosmic energy is not other than the conscious force of that Self-existent: by that energy it takes through universal nature innumerable forms of itself; through its divine nature It can, embracing the universal but transcendent of it, arrive in them at the individual possession of its complete existence, when its presence and power are felt in one, in all and in the relation of one with all;—this is the truth of being to which man's entire knowledge of himself in God and in Nature rises and widens. A triune knowledge, the complete knowledge of God, the complete knowledge of himself, the complete knowledge of Nature, gives him his high goal; it assigns a vast and full sense to the labour and effort of humanity. The conscious unity of the three, God, soul and Nature, in his own consciousness is the sure foundation of his perfection and his realisation of all harmonies: this will be his highest and widest state, his status of a divine consciousness and a divine life and its initiation the starting-point for his entire evolution of his self-knowledge, world-knowledge, God-knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo

to each other but not in their real unity, such will be the Force: it will be a life like that we are and see around us; it will be a clash and intertwining of individual lives seeking each its own fulfilment without knowing its relation to others, a conflict and difficult accommodation of divided and opposing or differing forces and, in the mentality, a mixing, a shock and wrestle and insecure combination of divided and opposing or divergent ideas which cannot arrive at the knowledge of their necessity to each other or grasp their place as elements of that Unity behind which is expressing itself through them and in which their discords must cease. But where the Consciousness is in possession of both the diversity and the unity and the latter contains and governs the former, where it is aware at once of the Law, Truth and Right of the All and the Law, Truth and Right of the individual and the two become consciously harmonised in a mutual unity, where the whole nature of the consciousness is the One knowing itself as the Many and the Many knowing themselves as the One, there the Force also will be of the same nature: It will be a life that consciously obeys the law of Unity and yet fulfils each thing in the diversity according to its proper rule and function; it will be a life in which all the individuals live at once in themselves and in each other as one conscious Being in many souls, one power of Consciousness in many minds, one joy of Force working in many lives, one reality

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of Delight fulfilling itself in many hearts and bodies.

Sri Aurobindo

PRAYER

O LORD, eternal Teacher, Thou whom we can neither name nor understand, but whom we would realise more at every moment, enlighten the intelligence, illumine our hearts, transfigure the consciousness; may everybody awaken to the true life, escape from egoism and its train of sorrow and anguish, in order to take refuge in Thy divine and pure Love, source of all peace and all happiness. My heart so full of Thee seems to expand to infinity, and my intelligence wholly enlightened with Thy Presence shines like the purest diamond. Thou art the marvellous magician, he who transfigures everything, makes beauty emerge out of ugliness, light out of darkness, clear water out of mud, knowledge out of ignorance and kindness out of egoism.

In Thee, by Thee, for Thee we live and Thy law is the supreme master of life. May Thy will be done in every place, may Thy peace reign over the whole earth.

The Mother

This yoga can only be done to the end by those who are in total earnest about it and ready to abolish their little human ego and its demands in order to find themselves in the Divine. It cannot be done in a spirit of levity or laxity; the work is too high and difficult, the adverse powers in the lower Nature too ready to take advantage of the least sanction or the smallest opening, the aspiration and tapasya needed too constant and intense. It cannot be done if there is a petulant self-assertion of the ideas of the human mind or wilful indulgence of the demands and instincts and pretensions of the lowest part of the being, commonly justified under the name of human nature. It cannot be done if you insist on identifying these lowest things of the Ignorance with the divine Truth or even the lesser truth permissible on the way. It cannot be done if you cling to your past self and its old mental, vital and physical formations and habits; one has continually to leave behind his past selves and to see, act and live from an always higher and higher conscious level. It cannot be done if you insist on "freedom" for your human mind and vital ego. All the parts of the human being are entitled to express and satisfy themselves in their own way at their own risk and peril, if he so chooses, as long as he lives the ordinary life. But to enter into a path of Yoga whose whole

object is to substitute for these human things the law and power of a greater Truth and the whole heart of whose method is surrender to the divine Shakti, and yet to go on claiming this so called freedom, which is no more than a subjection to certain ignorant cosmic forces, is to indulge in a blind contradiction and to claim the right to lead a double life.

Least of all can this Yoga be done if those who profess to be its sadhakas continue always to make themselves centres, instruments or spokesmen of the forces of the Ignorance which oppose, deny and ridicule its very principle and object. On one side there is the supramental realisation, the overshadowing and descending power of the supramental Divine, light and force of a far greater Truth than any yet realised on the earth, something therefore beyond what the little human mind and its logic regard as the only permanent realities, something whose nature and way and process of development here it cannot conceive or perceive by its own inadequate instruments or judge by its puerile standards; in spite of all opposition this is pressing down for manifestation in the physical consciousness and the material life. On the other side is this lower vital nature with all its pretentious arrogance, ignorance, obscurity, dullness or incompetent turbulence, standing for its own prolongation, standing against the descent, refusing to believe in any real reality or real

possibility of a supramental or superhuman consciousness and creation or, still more absurd, demanding, if it exists at all, that it should conform to its own little standards, seizing greedily upon everything that seems to disprove it, denying the presence of the Divine—for it knows that without that presence the work is impossible—affirming loudly its own thoughts, judgments, desires, instincts, and, if these are contradicted, avenging itself by casting abroad doubt, denial, disparaging criticism, revolt and disorder. These are the two things now in presence between which every one will have to choose.

For this opposition, this sterile obstruction and blockade against the descent of the divine Truth cannot last for ever. Every one must come down finally on one side or the other, on the side of the Truth or against it. The supramental realisation cannot co-exist with the persistence of the lower ignorance; it is incompatible with continued satisfaction in a double nature.

Sri Aurobindo